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# In the Kitchen after the Funeral

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was the final obscenity, and the old man got down  
beside me and I heard his heavy breathing and thought  
that now I too am old. It has been thirty years  
since a death like this one, my friend  
who was getting it all together. He too  
was the hope of literature and the arts  
and he left us on a Winter's day under a sky  
grey like a disease—another one gone now  
in the filthy snow and cracked ice on tarmac  
leaving me with not the slightest idea of what  
to say to widows and old fathers  
and these women who appear out of nowhere, perfumed  
and beyond consoling, sitting off to the side.

#### IN THE KITCHEN AFTER THE FUNERAL

*"Only by drinking of her  
could he fly."*

—James Agee

John is just as they knew him. Eyes are laughing,  
you can see, as he stands before a great banana tree  
in the rain forest, and the hand holding the picture  
is the hand of the girl whose hand belonged to John and now  
is careful not to wet with her tears  
this picture which is about all she has left. She shared  
with him the Amazon river, a jungle and hammock  
swung between trees, and this body of gold turning  
to lead with its breasts gone suddenly cold.